NAXOS WORLD

FOLK MUSIC OF CHINA, VOL.12

Folk Songs of the Bai, Nu and Derung Peoples

FOLK MUSIC OF CHINA, VOL. 12:
FOLK SONGS OF THE BAI, NU AND DERUNG PEOPLES

BAI

1 **Hu Yan E (love song duet)** 呼言額 (情歌對唱) - 3:44

2 **The Return of a Prodigal** 浪子回頭 - 1:45

3 **Song of Welcoming Guests** 迎賓曲 - 1:57

4 **Song of King's Whip** 霸王鞭曲 - 1:11

5 **Song of the Eastern Mountain (love song duet)** 東山調 (情歌對唱) - 2:30

6 **Sweetheart** 心肝兒票 - 1:08

7 **Song of Pond Loaches (folk song)** 泥鰍調 (白族小調) - 2:52

8 **Song of Four Seasons** 四季調 - 2:27

9 **Love Song Duet** 情歌對唱 - 6:34

10 **Kai Jing Ye (Dongjing ancient music)** 開經偈 (洞經古樂) - 5:49

11 **Xiao Kai Men (Dongjing ancient music)** 小開門 (洞經古樂) - 1:57

NU

12 **Ni Nu Jia Zhe (love folk song)** 妮奴家哲 (情歌, 山歌調) - 1:32

13 **Kun Ke Zhe (wedding song)** 昆克哲 (結婚歌) - 1:10

14 **Come over** 過來嘞 - 1:56

15 **Xiang La Zhe (hunting song)** 想拉哲 (狩獵調) - 3:18

16 **Love Song Duet** 情歌對唱 - 1:12

17 **Rang Fei Zhe (proposal song)** 讓菲哲 (問婚調) - 4:17

18 **Bao Yi Zhe** 包依哲 - 2:50

19 **Ao De De (love song, song of runaway lovers)** 奧得得 (情歌, 逃婚调) - 2:27

20 **Chi Tong Kua Shui** 赤同跨水 - 1:24

DERUNG

21 **A Match-Making Song** 提親歌 - 2:00

22 **Tangque from Gongga** 貢嘎塘雀 - 2:34

23 **Gu Lu Du Na (wedding song)** 咕嚕都那 (出嫁歌) - 4:02

24 **A Ritual Poem for Mountain Deities** 祭山神說詞 - 1:29

25 **A Duet Song of Match-Making** 提親對唱 - 2:01

26 **I am a Girl** 我是姑娘 - 2:51

27 **Xiu Long Dang Gang** 秀隆當崗 - 1:22

28 **An Ancient Song** 古歌 - 3:02

29 **Wang Meiding** 王美丁 - 4:09

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 76:34 MIN.

FOLK SONGS OF THE BAI, NU AND DERUNG PEOPLES

All three minorities live in Yunnan province, located in southwestern China. The majority of Bai people dwell in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, which is situated between the Tibetan and Yungui Plateaus, and after years of development has become a famous tourist attraction. As cross-border minorities, the Derung and the Nu peoples both live on the northwestern border of Yunnan, next to Myanmar. The Nu people live along the Nu River, which is a part of The Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas. The Derung people live along the banks of Dulong River, which originates in Tibet, runs through northwestern Yunnan, and finally flows into Myanmar.

BAI PEOPLE

The Bai people and their ancestors have lived in the area of Erhai Lake for thousands of years. From the 8th to the 13th centuries, as a part of the ruling class of local regimes in Yunnan, they exerted great cultural influence on the other ethnic peoples who lived in the area. Many of these cultural exchanges were with the Han people. For example, the Bai language features an abundance of Chinese words, so the majority understand Chinese. They also employed the Chinese language, and its variants, to record their folklore and history. However, in recent years the Bai people have transliterated their language using the Latin alphabet. Han tunes, meaning the songs from the Han Chinese, form an important part of Bai music; for example, their narrative singing often includes lyrical adaptations of the Han folk stories.

The Bai people mainly believe in Benzhu – 'deified ancestors', 'lords' or 'land gods' of the local community. Therefore, different villages worship their own local gods. These deities are thought to protect the locals against illness, support local economy, and grant prosperity. As well as Benzhu, Taoism and Buddhism are also popular in this area.

Music Categories

Folk songs, dance and instrumental music, narrative singing, and opera, all contribute towards the exquisite Bai music culture. Bai folk songs include Bai tunes, Han tunes, ditties and children's songs. The Bai tunes, also known as mountain songs, are split into several subcategories according to regional differences. For example, track 5 is one of the Jianchuan eastern mountain tunes. Its sonorous melody starts with high notes and nonsensical words, and its lyrics and sheep bleating depict a scene of two shepherds meeting. The Bai tunes are usually sung solo, or as a duet, and sometimes accompanied by a three-stringed plucked lute. Track 6 is also a Bai tune sung in the Jianchuan area. The Bai words *Xingan'er piao* mean 'my dearest sweetheart'. It is accompanied by a three-stringed plucked lute, decorated with a carved figure of a dragon's head.

Unlike the Bai tunes, the Bai ditties are short songs and are sung indoors. For example, track 7, also accompanied by a decorated three-stringed plucked lute, is one of the most popular ditties in the Bai language.

Bawang bian, meaning 'King's whip', is a percussion instrument, and also the name of the collective dance holding the instrument. The Bawang bian is made of bamboo or wooden sticks, which are about eighty centimetres in length. Copper coins are inserted into the sticks to make sounds when the dancers hit their bodies according to the rhythm. Track 4 accompanies this dance.

Tracks 10 and 11 both feature *Dongjing ancient music*, which was originally used as ritual music for the Taoist scripture *Wenchang dadong xianjing* (文昌大洞仙经, Transcendent scripture of the great grotto of Wenchang). Wenchang is the Taoist deity of culture and literature.

Many believe that the Dongjing ancient music, performed in the Bai area, originated from Sichuan province and went on to become popular in Yunnan in the 17th century. Nowadays, Bai Dongjing music is more secularized after gradually absorbing various folk tunes and poetry.

NU PEOPLE

Although the majority of the Nu people live in Yunnan, there is still a sparse distribution around the Tibetan border. According to their dialects, customs and identity recognition, the ethnic group is divided into four branches. The Nu people use the languages of Bai, Lisu, Chinese and Tibetan, among which the Lisu language is more popular. They have no written language of their own.

Spiritual practices are ever-present in their traditional native beliefs, and their folklore includes a wide range of magical myths. Traditionally, Animism was their preferred faith, however more recently Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity have been introduced.

Music Categories

The Nu people have developed a flourishing folk music tradition. Since they live between Yunnan and Tibet, the northern style of Nu music is influenced by Tibetan music, while the southern style shares more features with Lisu music, including the instruments used. For example, the instrument *Qiben*, a plucked lute played by the Lisu, is called *Da bi ya* by the Nu. The southern style also includes the throat trill of Lisu music.

Track 19 is a type of traditional folk tune named *Ao de de*, which are also the beginning syllables of these tunes. *Ao de de,* originating from the word "missing" in the Nu language, is the general name for love songs and love dances. They are popular among those living around the Fugong county, where this track was recorded. Usually accompanied by *Da bi ya*, these tunes are often about the feelings between young lovers. This track describes a couple's wish to escape from their previously arranged marriages, in order to live together.

Some folk tunes also reflect ancient hunting customs and the primitive beliefs of the Nu people. In the past, after catching a beast, the Nu people performed a sacrificial ritual to the gods of animals. During the sacrifice, they hung up the head of the beast, which wore a string of women's beads. They sang to the gods, asking them to bring them more beasts. Track 15 features this type of hunting song.

Instruments

Da bi ya is the main plucked instrument. It used to have three strings, but a fourth was added later on. As the oldest instrument of the Nu it has more than seventy ways of tuning for different tunes. With a bright and expressive timbre, *Da bi ya* has developed many abundant tunes, of which *Ao de de* are the most popular.

The Nu have two types of Jew's harps: one with a tongue, the other with three tongues. The one-tongued Jew's harp can only make one note, while the three-tongued harp makes three fixed notes. Track 20 features Jew's harps.

DERUNG PEOPLE

The Derung people were first mentioned in Chinese historical materials in the 13th century. However, the communication and cultural exchanges between the Derung people and the outside world were limited, due to the Dulong River being enclosed by high mountains. Consequently, through their isolation, their language maintains many ancient characteristics. They also have no written language of their own, so use Chinese.

Before the middle of the 20th century, the female Derungs had a custom of tattooing their faces; the design expressed which clan they followed. This custom was frowned upon by the Communist Government and was abandoned in 1949.

The Derung people also believe in animism, and that shamans can treat ailments and illnesses with their supernatural powers. Their oral literature comprises of many myths, epics and folk stories.

Music Categories

Derung music includes folk tunes, dance songs and instrumental music. This album incorporates several types of folk tunes: sacrificial songs, custom songs and complaint ballads. Track 24 is a ritual poem for sacrificing to the mountain deities, and the custom songs – tracks 21, 23 and 25 – all reflect their marriage customs. Male adults are required to marry women from their uncle's clan, which causes objections or 'complaints' about arranged marriages, this being the main feature of the complaint tunes. Characterized by adapting a true story, track 23 details a young lady's reluctance to marry a man from a remote place. As we hear, the complaint tunes usually employ a broad vocal range and are structured with the repetition of one or several phrases.

Instruments

Derung music is played using very few instruments. Some of the percussion instruments that often accompany dances include gongs and cymbals, and the females often favour different types of Jew's harp. Their folk tunes are played on vertical flutes with six holes.

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KAZAKHSTAN
MONGOLIA
CHINA
NEPAL
Nu and Derung
Bai
YUNNAN
INDIA

BAI

1. Hu Yan E (love song duet) 呼言額 (情歌對唱)
Singers: Li Baomei, Jiang Zhongde
Lyrics:
Man: "Girl, wait for me while you are walking uphill. Please hold my hand, and I will be so pleased."
Woman: "Take it slow, my boy. It's only midnight and bigger celebrations will begin at 3am. Don't worry, it's still very early."

2. The Return of a Prodigal 浪子回頭
Singer: Zhang Dingkun
Sanxian performer: Li Changbao
Men should be industrious and not wander aimlessly, wasting time.

3. Song of Welcoming Guests 迎賓曲
Singer: Zhang Silan
Thank you, my friends, for coming all the way here to visit us. I hope everything goes well for you and wish you happiness and joy.

4. Song of King's Whip 霸王鞭曲
Singer: Zhang Guoyong
Sanxian performer: Li Changbao
The sound of the King's whip is loud. Let's dance in celebration of our harvest.

5. Song of the Eastern Mountain (love song duet) 東山調 (情歌對唱)
Singers: Li Baomei, Jiang Zhongde
Lyrics:
Man: "Which village are you from, shepherd girl?"
Woman: "Your sheep ran over to my field!"
Man: "It's alright. Let's shepherd together."
Woman: "So be it. I'm happy as long as you are happy."

6. Sweetheart 心肝兒票
Singers: Li Deqing, Li Kun'an
Sanxian performer: Jiang Zhongde
My sweetheart, I will follow you wherever you go. It's as though everything has been planned, we met each other today and went home hand-in-hand.

7. Song of Pond Loaches (folk song) 泥鰍調 (白族小調)
Singers: Li Baomei, Jiang Zhongde
Pond loaches with shiny skin can survive on land and under water. I hid in the grass, under water, but you caught me anyway. Men told me I would be fried, while women said I would be pickled. I am so scared! You put me on the dinner table, and I can't do anything to stop you from devouring me. I can only hope to pierce through your throat with my bones.

8. Song of Four Seasons 四季調
Singer: Zhang Wenkun
Sanxian performer: Li Changbao
All flowers will bloom in spring, it gets hot in the summer, and a fruitful winter follows an autumn of harvest.

9. Love Song Duet 情歌對唱
Singers: Jiang Zhongde, Zhang Si'an
An impromptu duet expressing their love.

10. Kai Jing Ye (Dongjing ancient music) 開經偈 (洞經古樂)
Performers: Dongjing band from Shilong Village, Shaxi Town, Jianchuan County.
A ritual song, often performed in ceremonies.

11. Xiao Kai Men (Dongjing ancient music) 小開門 (洞經古樂)
Performers: Dongjing band from Shilong Village, Shaxi Town, Jianchuan County.
A ritual song, often performed in ceremonies.

NU

12. Ni Nu Jia Zhe (love folk song) 妮奴家哲 (情歌, 山歌調)
Singer: La Ji
My beloved one, are you on the hillside or the valley? I miss you and long for your beauty. I can hear your voice but can't seem to see your face. My beloved one, are you on the hillside or the valley?

13. Kun Ke Zhe (wedding song) 昆克哲 (結婚歌)
Singers: La Ji, La Gen
Today is a happy day. For generations this is how we have welcomed our new daughters-in-law, and this is how we treat our guests to food and drinks. Once the new bride enters the house, she becomes part of the family.

14. Come over 過來嘞
Singers: Yu Wulin, Lu Binghua, Sang Qiuyu
Come take a rest, come have some fun. Although we don't have delicacies or fun games, we can still sing like this for three days and nights, and dance like this for seven days and nights. We have got together like this for generations. Ants have their nest, and grasshoppers have their habitat on the tree.

15. Xiang La Zhe (hunting song) 想拉哲 (狩獵調)
Singer: La Ji
Goddess, goddess, we miss you so dearly. You have lived on the mountain covered with snow for too long. Come back, please come back goddess. You oversee all the animals on the ground and in the sky, and you are the goddess who blesses us with prey. Please come home to see the blossom of your cogon grass and lilies.

(The reference to 'cogon grass' here also symbolises women's braids, and 'lilies' refer to porcelain accessories that women wear in front of their chests.)

16. Love Song Duet 情歌對唱
Singers: Yu Wulin, Lu Binghua, Sang Qiuyu
Lyrics: Let's meet in our village.
Woman: "If you are afraid of my dog, just climb over the fence from the other side."
Man: "My beloved one, I got drunk on the thought of you, and I have a headache because I think of you so much."

17. Rang Fei Zhe (proposal song) 讓菲哲 (問婚調)
Singers: La Ji, La Gen
I didn't come here for no reason, or for fun. I'm here to see how the vegetables in your yard are doing, and the wheat on your farm. I'm here to ask your mother for the vegetable seeds and your father for the wheat seeds.

We don't have this type of vegetable, but you have possibly seen it in our neighbour's yard; we don't have this type of wheat, but you have possibly seen it on our neighbour's farm. Your vegetables are growing well, and so you can use one leaf as your rain coat and hat; your wheat is growing well, and so you can use the straw to make flutes and suona horns. If you want seeds for this type of vegetable and wheat, you will have to go to the villages above and below us respectively.

18. Bao Yi Zhe 包依哲
Singers: La Ji, La Gen
It was not easy to raise a girl. You had to change her diapers three times a night and seven times during the day. This amount of alcohol is not enough for us, nor this amount of food. Bring out the food and alcohol and let us eat and drink. Now it won't be a problem if you want to eat and drink here for three days in a row. We have more food and alcohol in the house and it will not run out. Have as much fun as you want in our house.

19. Ao De De (love song, song of runaway lovers) 奥得得 (情歌, 逃婚调)
Singers: Yu Wulin, Lu Binghua, Sang Qiuyu, and others
I miss you so very much. The thought of you is engraved on my heart and has turned into a scar. Let's go to Duduluo together, and let's go to Xiuxiuluo too. Let's go!

20. Chi Tong Kua Shui 赤同跨水
Harmonica performers: Ya Yong, Yu Wulin

DERUNG

21. A Match-Making Song 提親歌
Singer: Mu Wenying
The parents of both couples sing this song to each other, to assist the match-making of their children.

22. Tangque from Gongga 貢嘎塘雀
Singer: Ken Guoqing
Gongga is the name of village, and *Tangque* is the girl's name. The song is based on a true story – Tangque's mother wanted her to marry a man on the northern side of the river, but she refused because she had no feelings for him. Not wanting to disobey her mother, Tanggque was unsure what to do. She ended up poisoning herself and died.

23. Gu Lu Du Na (wedding song) 咕嚕都那 (出嫁歌)
Singer: Mu Wenying
I will have to marry a man who is not local, as none of the local men want to marry me.
Daughters sing this song to their fathers.

24. A Ritual Poem for Mountain Deities 祭山神說詞
Read by Mu Wenying

25. A Duet Song of Match-Making 提親對唱
Singer: Mu Wenying, Ken Guoqing
Lyrics:
Woman: "I have made up my mind to match my son with your daughter. Please help me with your permission and approve this request."
Man: "It's great that you have initiated, but I don't have many daughters. I'm afraid I can't help you."

26. I am a Girl 我是姑娘
Singer: Mu Wenying
We are deeply in love with each other and should be together for the rest of our lives. But my elder brother won't agree or compromise, so we can't be a happy family.

27. Xiu Long Dang Gang 秀隆當崗
Singer: Lu Ling
When you are young, nobody stops you from doing what you want to do. But after I got married, I didn't get a chance to go where I wanted or do the things that I wanted to do. I whistled on the Jialeng Mountain, and a young man from the mountain across from mine whistled back.

28. An Ancient Song 古歌
Singer: Mu Wenying

29. **Wang Meiding** 王美丁
Singer: Mu Wenying
Wang Meiding likes a girl. If that girl turns him down, her hometown will become deserted.